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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 24, 2011

COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEES ON  
AVIATION  
HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT  
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COAST GUARD AND  
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COMMITTEE ON  
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SUBCOMMITTEES ON  
ENERGY THREATS, CYBERSECURITY  
AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS,  
PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE

Mr. Arthur T. Leahy  
Chief Executive Officer  
Metro  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor

Dear Mr. Leahy,

I write to you today in support of the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor project and, more specifically, for a station at Leimert Park Village and tunnels through Park Mesa Heights. I have worked extensively to help METRO realize their vision for transforming the region's transportation system. I have championed innovative financing mechanisms to fund projects such as this, including the TIFIA Expansion Act which I worked closely with METRO to develop and has been officially endorsed by METRO. I hope to work with those on the METRO Board to properly utilize these funds and ensure that we create a system that works best for all our citizens.

While my own congressional district lies further south than these areas, this matter is particularly significant to me, as one of the two Southern Californians out of the 435 Members of Congress to serve on the House of Representative's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, with an appointment to the Subcommittee for Highways and Transit. In this role I represent the entire region and State, I understand all too well how imperative transit systems are to promoting thriving economic and social communities and the tough financial realities of facing large scale projects of this nature.

This project has drawn national attention, especially in Washington DC. John Mica, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on which I serve, as well as many others have noted that the LAX connection is a significant "missing link" in our transit network.

With the construction of the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor, which will connect the metro system with LAX airport, there is currently consideration for building a station at Leimert Park Village. I believe a station at Leimert Park Village is paramount to the success of an L.A. County transit system that aims to connect its citizens and benefit the county at large. This area is the undisputed cultural and commercial center of the Crenshaw Corridor and a true destination point for those in the surrounding area. A Metro station at Leimert Park would be a much needed stimulus to the local economy by finally providing residents and visitors easier and more

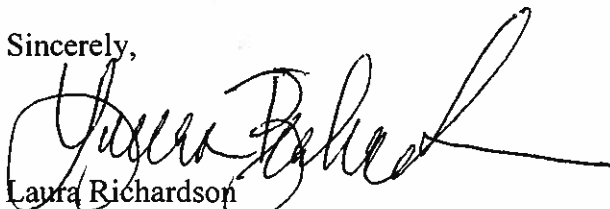
direct access to the numerous small and locally-owned businesses within the Corridor. Omitting a station at Leimert Park Village would be a glaring mistake that would directly undermine the integrity and goals of the entire project.

In addition to the creation Leimert Park Village Station, I urge you to implement tunneling through the Park Mesa Heights area. While there are numerous advantages to tunneling, I believe the most important reason is no doubt to promote public safety. With so many schools and senior housing projects in the area, we best serve citizens and keep them safe by ensuring that rail lines intrude as little as possible into local neighborhoods where pedestrian and vehicle traffic can be very high. If this reason alone is not enough to persuade Metro to utilize tunneling in the Park Mesa Heights area, then consider the economic benefit suggested by your own study, which anticipates tunneling to cause a 4% increase in ridership and fare revenue. Finally, the estimated 12% reduction in travel time that tunneling provides will most certainly increase the incentive among commuters to utilize Metro transit, again increasing ridership and fare revenue, with collateral benefits that include air quality improvement and congestion relief on local roads and highways.

As we look to build a truly modern transportation system, we need to invest properly up front. We have seen the disruption at grade crossings have caused and how costly and disruptive it is to reverse the mistakes of the past and create grade separations. Let us not repeat this mistake by creating an at grade system when better alternatives exist that might be funded utilizing alternative funds, such as highway-related funds, that may be able to help close the gaps in properly executing this project.

For the reasons I have listed above in mind, I strongly encourage Metro to support projects that benefit a wide array of the citizenry of L.A. County, and especially those along the Crenshaw/LAX Corridor, by creating a Leimert Park Village Station and tunneling through Park Mesa Heights. Projects like the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor will reiterate Metro's commitment to an efficient and effective world class transportation system for Los Angeles County and is in the social and economic best interests of all parties.

Sincerely,



Laura Richardson  
Member of Congress